

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED APR 28 1976

DATE ENTERED SEP 3 1976

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

~~**~~ *pl*
Montana Territorial and State Prison

AND/OR COMMON

Montana State Prison

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

925 Main Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Deer Lodge

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

VICINITY OF

21

STATE

Montana

CODE

30

COUNTY

Deer Lodge

powell

CODE

023-77

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- COMMERCIAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- ENTERTAINMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER: prison

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

State of Montana

STREET & NUMBER

Department of Institutions

CITY, TOWN

Helena

VICINITY OF

STATE

Montana

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Montana Department of State Lands

STREET & NUMBER

1625 Eleventh Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Helena

STATE

Montana

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Historic Preservation Plan, Volume II: Montana Historic Sites Compendium

DATE

July, 1975

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Recreation & Parks Division, Montana Department of Fish and Game

CITY, TOWN

Helena

STATE

Montana

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Montana Territorial and State Prison is located on Main Street in the southwest section of the city of Deer Lodge. Its western boundary is the Clark Fork River. The original prison wall(1) of buff colored stone was erected by convict labor in 1892. The wall is of finely dressed random ashlar stone quarried locally with a granite coping; the granite came from Helena, Montana. The thick wall is strengthened by projecting stone pilasters. The corners are marked by four round towers. Two square towers, Romanesque in design, are located mid-way on the east and west walls, having crenelated parapets on small corbelled arches in the wall. The wall was extended north in 1911 to allow for prisoner construction of a 400-man cell block in 1912.

Within the wall stands the 400-man cell block(2) erected in 1912 and still in use today. This building measures 224 feet by 80 feet and is 80 feet high. This elaborate red brick structure has four square towers, one at each corner. These towers, which contained the guards' quarters originally, have paired windows set in segmental arches. The extremely tall barred windows of the cell block proper are set in vertical strips with one window above the other, set off by cut limestone lintels, banding and coping. The walls are decorated by elaborate corbelling and are capped by battlements.

The interior has a free-standing cell block of 8 tiers having 25 cells each. Each cell contains two bunks, a toilet and a sink which furnishes only cold water. The locking mechanism is original equipment, having been built by the Pauly Jail Company of St. Louis. It has been overhauled only once but has been modernized with a control light system.

A brick theater(3), 105 feet by 65 feet by 30 feet high, was built in 1918-1919 inside the south wall and has a seating capacity today of 700 but once had 1,000 seats. The entry has a vernacular Tuscan style innovation with textured brick panels. The cornice has been carved and painted (a later procedure) with a "coil motif" band. The foyer is finished in Mission oak. The auditorium has a raised stage and balcony. The murals on the wall were done by a prisoner in 1921. This building was one of the best preserved structures in the prison but a fire on December 9, 1975 badly damaged the interior.

An "inside-the-walls" administration building(4), two stories in height, of concrete block was built in 1930-31 and stands on the site of the original 1870 federal prison building torn down in 1930. The Hospital/Segregation Building(5) was constructed in 1931 inside the north wall west of Cell Block Number One. The prefabricated metal gymnasium(6), school(7), and food service building(8) were erected recently and will be removed after inmates are transferred to the new prison now under construction.

There is a 25-cell Maximum Security Building(9) located west of the main Prison Wall. It was originally built as a Women's Ward in about 1918. The building is in good condition but has not been used in recent years due to lack of toilet facilities. Recently, however, chemical toilets were installed and this unit is again being utilized for maximum security prisoners.

The Power House(10) and Water Well Structures(11) are located outside the west Prison Wall north of the Maximum Security Building wall. The Power House was badly

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CONTINUATION SHEET

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damaged by fire on February 23, 1976 and an auxiliary heating system has since been necessary for the prison's 380 inmates.

Attached to the outside of the south Prison Wall is the Industrial/Laundry Building(12). Immediately southeast of this structure also outside the wall is a building complex consisting of the present Inmate Dormitory(13), Storage Building(14), and Visitors Unit(15). These buildings were constructed in the 1910-1930 period.

During the latter part of 1976 the new prison west of Deer Lodge will begin operation and the original will be abandoned by the state. If Congressional approval can be obtained, the state plans to sell or donate the site to the city of Deer Lodge for use as a cultural center and museum complex after removing the prefabricated buildings.

Inventory of Structures at Montana State Prison

*Architecturally Significant - To Be Removed

- *(1) Prison Wall: erected 1892, extended 1911.
- *(2) Cell Block Number One: actually the third cell block constructed, 1912.
- *(3) Clark Fork Theatre: built 1918-1919.
- (4) Administration Building: built 1930-1931.
- (5) Hospital/Segregation Building: built 1931.
- (6) Prefabricated metal gymnasium: erected 1970.
- (7) Prefabricated metal school building.
- (8) Prefabricated food service building.
- (9) Maximum Security Building (Women's Ward): built ca. 1918.
- (10) Power House: built in 1911.
- (11) Water Well Structure.
- (12) Industrial/Laundry Building: built ca. 1910-1930.
- (13) Inmate Dormitory: built ca. 1910-1930.
- (14) Storage Building: built ca. 1910-1930.
- (15) Visitors Unit: built ca. 1910-1930.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1976	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)		
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION				

SPECIFIC DATES 1870 - present

BUILDER/ARCHITECT several; see below

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Montana became a Territory in 1864. Shortly thereafter its citizens petitioned the United States government to establish a federal penitentiary within its borders. An act was passed to locate the new facility in Deer Lodge and 9 3/4 acres were set aside in a federal land grant to the Territory of Montana for the proposed prison.

In 1868 the sum of \$40,000 was appropriated for the construction of the prison and instructions to bidders were issued in October of 1869. The granite cornerstone was officially dedicated on Thursday, June 2, 1870. The stone had a cavity for appropriate artifacts, including a Tribune and World Almanac of 1870, a copy of the local paper, a list of names of Territorial and county officials, population of the town, U.S. coins and notes, and eight ounces of Old Crow whiskey. A 40 foot by 80 foot two-story stone building having 28 cells was erected. At that time there was no confining wall. On July 2, 1871, the Mansard-style building received the first of its twelve prisoners, and U.S. Marshall B. F. Wheeler was designated as the prison's first warden.

In May, 1873, Montana Territory requested financial responsibility for the prison, but operation of the facility proved so expensive that the federal government was forced to resume control in August, 1874. In 1875 the facilities were expanded as a wing having 14 cells was added. Also a 12 foot high board fence was built around the area. In 1885 the south wing was erected by the firm of McConnell and McDevitt.

Montana became a state in 1889 and had to accept responsibility for the prison. At that time the facilities consisted of the original cell block with wings, two log buildings, and the wooden fence. As a temporary expedient, the State placed the sheriff of Powell County in charge until a way could be found to cope with its financial problems.

The State of Montana advertised for bidders to operate the prison and the firm of Conley & McTague was the low bidder and accepted authority to feed, cloth and guard the prisoners at the rate of 76¢ per day for each convict. Frank Conley, the outstanding figure in the history of the prison, became the new warden, a position he held for over 30 years.

This was followed by a unique period of contractual endeavors by the firm, using convict labor for both state and private purposes. In 1892-3 they built the sandstone retaining wall and in 1896 a 200-man cell block was begun and completed the following year. At the time it was reported to be the most modern facility of its kind in the country. The convicts not only quarried stone locally and cut it within the grounds but they also operated a brickyard and a sawmill. Bricks were furnished for other

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Blodgett, James G. Personal Communication, October 9, 1975. Deputy Warden, Montana State Prison, Deer Lodge.
 Kalispell Times. Kalispell, Montana. July 13, 1939.
 Mattern, Carolyn J. "Deer Lodge prison has colorful past," Montana Post. Montana Historical Society, Helena, Montana. Vol. 12, No. 1. Feb.-Mar., 1974.
 Report of the State Board of Prison Commissioners, 1896 and 1897.
 The New Northwest. Deer Lodge, Montana. October 1, 1869; June 3, 1870.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 9.75

UTM REFERENCES

A	<u>1,2</u>	<u>3,6,6</u>	<u>5,7,5</u>	<u>5,1</u>	<u>3,8</u>	<u>9,0,0</u>	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING				
C							D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The Montana Territorial and State Prison is bounded on the north by Pennsylvania Avenue; on the east by Main Street; on the south by Conley Avenue; and on the west by the high water mark of the Clark Fork River.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

John N. DeHaas, Jr., Historical Architect/David G. Conklin, Planner

ORGANIZATION

Recreation and Parks Division

DATE

April 1, 1976

STREET & NUMBER

Montana Department of Fish and Game

TELEPHONE

(406) 449-2532

CITY OR TOWN

Helena

STATE

Montana 59601

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Ron Holliday

TITLE Montana State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE April 20, 1976

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Wm. Murtagh

DATE 9/3/76

ATTEST: Robert B. Ketting

DATE 9/2/76

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Acting

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state institutions as well as for numerous private buildings around the state.

In 1908 the State terminated the contract maintenance system and assumed direct control. Conley, who had a great deal of influence in Helena, was reappointed warden. He had already exercised this influence in 1893 to prevent moving the prison to Billings.

Almost immediately Conley encountered difficulties because of the state's lack of funds and the large increase in the number of inmates. As a result, in 1909 the state passed a law in effect validating the system of prison labor already instituted by Conley, as well as permitting labor within the prison. Although organized labor strenuously protested this entry into the free labor market, during the second decade of this century as much as 50% of the prison population was employed on these work projects. Generally limited to projects of direct benefit to the state, these projects were responsible for the construction of miles of Montana roads, several new buildings at Warm Springs and Galen (state institutions), as well as most of the new construction at the prison. In 1911 the prisoners enlarged the sandstone wall and built a bridge and a power plant.

In 1912 the existing 400-man cell block was built. It was designed by the architectural firm of Link and Haire and built with convict labor. The theater was built in 1918, again with convict-manufactured brick and convict labor. It was financed by former Senator W. A. Clark, in appreciation for the services of the convicts on his ranch and their work for the Anaconda Copper Company. This was reportedly the first theater within the confines of a prison in the United States.

During the Progressive era when prison reform became a national concern, Conley was in the forefront of the movement in Montana. Although skeptical of many of the reformers' schemes, he was adamant in supporting his parole and honor systems against criticism. While other states chained their road gangs, Conley's honor camps lived in tents, unchained, and their guards unarmed. In 1910 he abolished stripes, and at a time when few prisons had movies, he found that deprivation of attendance at the films constituted the prison's most effective form of punishment.

Conley was apparently also farsighted in his theory of criminal behavior; he speculated that 50% of the prisoners required mental treatment rather than imprisonment, and that early home training was crucial in preventing antisocial behavior. He repeatedly stressed the importance of maintaining each prisoners' identity and of providing useful work. Thus Conley's tenure saw a constant expansion in number and variety of recreational and work programs.

In 1921 Conley was forced from his position for political reasons and brought to trial for embezzlement of funds owed the state. Although he was acquitted, the following years witnessed the gradual termination of most of Conley's programs.

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By the 1930's, due in large part to the efforts of organized labor, all out-of-prison labor was stopped. A strict silent system was put into effect, also.

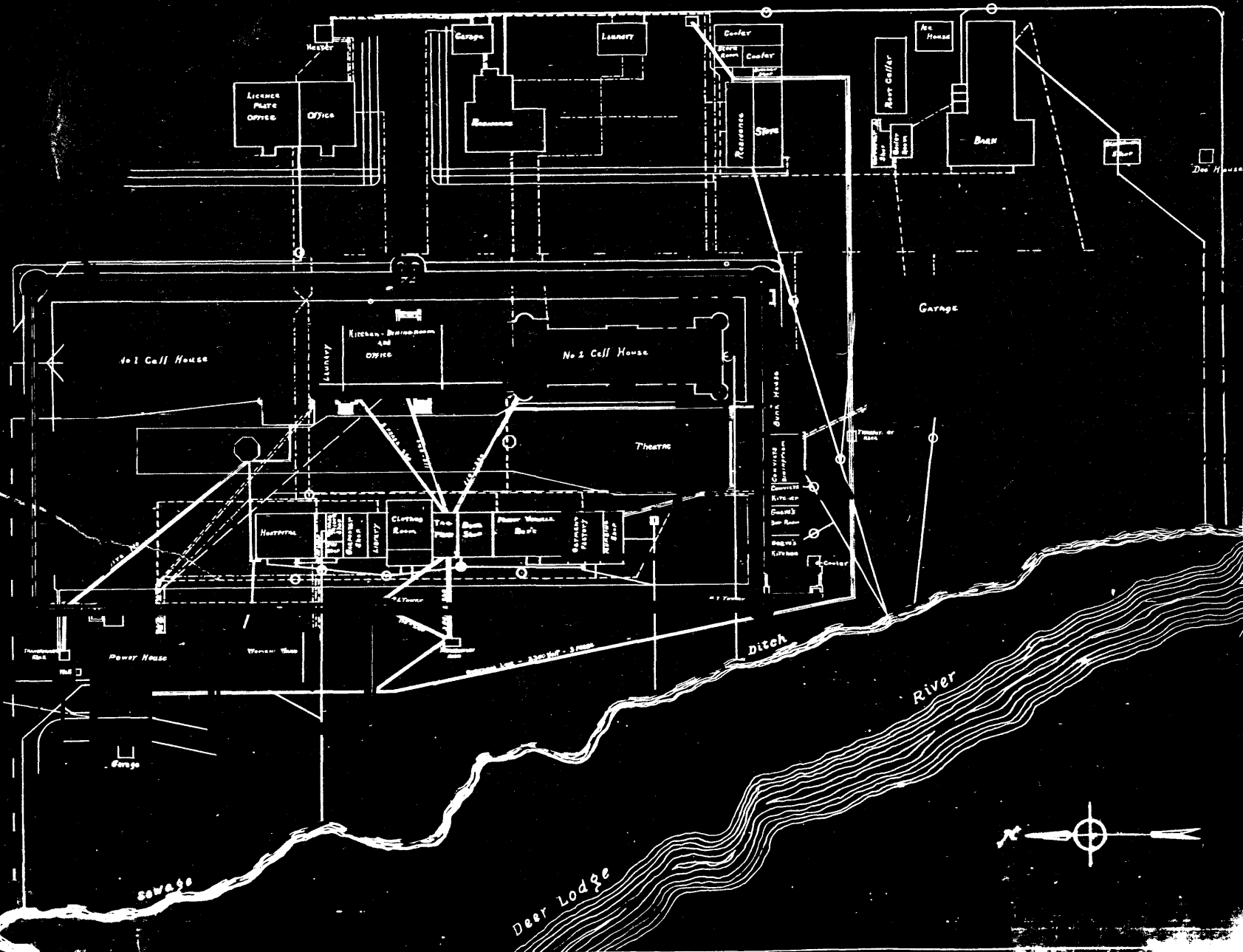
In 1930-31 a concrete block administration building was built inside the walls on the site of the 1870 federal prison. It is still in use.

The 200-man cell block built in 1896-97 was used for more than fifty years. It was damaged in the widespread Montana earthquake of 1959 and was torn down shortly thereafter. It had been under attack earlier as being substandard; the cells had no toilet facilities and were inadequately lighted and heated.

It is the prisoners themselves, however, that played the most significant part in the history of the prison. Their lives, and thus the life of the prison, remain largely a history yet to be written. It is known that only 2 hangings were ever performed here, both in March, 1908, due to an attack on Conley and the killing of his chief deputy. This is significant because state law dictates that a criminal be executed in the county the crime was committed. A list of nationally known criminals who have been confined here from time to time would be large indeed. In fact, one of Montana's Indians confined here name David Stanley, better known as Whirlwind, was blamed as being largely responsible for the Cheyenne Outbreak of 1897.

During the 1950's much of the public discussion of the prison focused upon the political appointment of the warden and the high turnover rate of the prison staff. In 1957 a bloodless riot partially corrected this situation. In 1959 the second riot in the prison's history was put down by National Guardsmen. This time several prisoners and a deputy warden were killed, and the resulting public outcry brought to light deteriorating conditions within the prison. Despite an almost universal feeling that the century old prison complex was inadequate, the discussion over the nature of a modern institution and its function within society continues as a topic of debate into the present.

MAP OF MONTANA STATE PRISON



LEGEND	
Sewage	---
Steam	---
Water	---
Electricity	---
Air Hole	○
Fire Plug	○
Sink Box	□
Gas	---

